

SARDI – DRYING APRICOT VARIETY

Grower Information Guide

RiverCot 8

(Syn 31054)

South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI)

'RiverCot 8' was developed at SARDI's Loxton Research Centre (LRC) in the Riverland of South Australia. A very good high production drying apricot, it produces at both ends, reliable high fresh tonnage's and a good quality dried product with good dry ratios. Clean, highly sugared and firm with good size, it is robust with a precocious, very heavy cropping habit. This variety is only suitable for drying as its flesh texture is somewhat pasty, although the underlying taste is good. If you are a dried fruit producer this variety should be on your list of core varieties to investigate.

All data presented in this guide refers to trees grown at the Loxton Research Centre (LRC) on Myrobalan H29C plum rootstock, unless specifically stated. Performance on other rootstocks is untested.



Fresh fruit of RiverCot 8 on young trees December 2017



Bloom of RiverCot 8 September 2017

The purpose of this Grower Information Guide is to provide information to help growers make an informed decision on the planting of this apricot variety.

RiverCot 8 is a protected variety. A signed non-propagation agreement is required before tree delivery. Trees are available for commercial planting from winter 2018.

Timing of blossom:	Early season (7 Sept).
Pollination:	Self-fertile.
Cropping:	Very high, precocious & consistent.
Ripening period:	Mid-Season. 21 December (Story, 14 Dec; Moorpark, 29 Dec).
Shape:	Roundish with compressed cheeks.
Fresh fruit size:	Large (50mm av., 53mm max).
Skin:	Pale orange with a very slight pinkish blush.
Flesh:	Orange.
Eating quality:	Poor, pasty texture.
Flavour:	Good.
Stone:	Large and very free.
Fruit firmness:	Moderately firm at maturity.
TSS level:	Very high (23 Brix). Excellent for drying.
Cracking:	Possibly susceptible.



Fresh fruit of tree ripe RiverCot 8.

Dry ratio:	Good (5.0:1).
Dried fruit size:	Large.
Dried quality:	Good.
Dried fruit colour:	Orange.
Dried fruit storage:	6-12 months at 25°C and 65%RH.

Table 1 History of 'RiverCot 8' trees on Myrobalan H29C plum rootstock in secondary evaluation at the Loxton Research Centre.

TREE AGE	HARVEST DATE	CROP	FRUIT SIZE (mm)	FRUIT SIZE (g)	TSS (°Brix)
2	5/12/13	Light	46	42	25.5
3	22/12/14	Moderate Heavy	53	61	24
4	16/12/15	Moderate Heavy	46	50	25.5
5	23/12/16	Heavy	52	70	23
6	24/12/17	Very Heavy	48	54	20



Dried halves of RiverCot 8 2017

The Fruit: RiverCot 8 is a superior high cropping drying apricot that not only produces consistent high fruit volumes, it will also impart high TSS levels to that crop. The fresh apricot is orange, moderately firm, sweet and good tasting with some acidity at tree ripe but its texture is poor and pasty. The skin is plain, slightly lumpy and slightly pale but clean. High fruit sugar levels make it prone to some rain damage and skin shrivel. This is not an issue if used for drying. Very free stoned it can stone burn but only seems to on heavy crops or higher. Testing in 2017/18 over a cutting machine showed it aligned well and retained very few stones.

It has shown consistent good dry ratios in the high 4's to low 5's and seems quite forgiving on maturity. Its average dry ratio of 5.0 while only rated as good is probably underrated because of the heavy crops under which it has been achieved. Dried fruit looked similar in quality to Moorpark on the six occasions it has been test dried. On most of these occasions the crop loads were high, an increased quality performance was seen on a moderately heavy crop, so the line appears capable of better. A 2017 dried sample tested in a consumer panel rated 109 & 114 for eating experience and appearance respectively, compared to Moorpark's 89 & 96. Consumers seem to like it for its colour, higher sweetness and slightly elevated sourness which offsets this. Trial growers on limited experience are starting to report positively on this line. In 2017/18 a trial grower offered the following comment *"Prone to a little bit of splitting. Ripened all together and very free stone. Fantastic to cut with stones falling out. Taste very good and firm at maturity. Potential Moorpark replacement after more trials. Excellent!"*

Evidence suggests this line is superior to both Story and Moorpark in its production potential and should be strongly considered by dried fruit producers.

This is an outstanding apricot for dried apricot production

The Tree: RiverCot 8 is a vigorous, spreading, spur bearing tree. It benefits from an increase in the number of leaders (6-7) to better fill space and spread vigour when grown in "free standing V" type systems. It appears well suited to pedestrian orchards planted at 4.5m by 2.5m spacing. Trees appear naturally shorter and spreading, easily kept to a pedestrian height due to an early heavy cropping habit. Summer pruning as a young tree will improve subsequent fruiting structures within the tree and reduce shading preventing a drop in fruit quality. Self-fertile with strong flowers and overall bloom it is capable of very large crops. Biennial bearing has not been observed to date but it may be advisable to practice some crop moderation on very heavy crops.

Disclaimer

This variety is unproven in commercial production. Testing has not been completed over a range of regions, rootstocks and management conditions. Growers wishing to plant 'RiverCot 8' should exercise appropriate caution.

This variety will be supplied with no guarantee of any kind and the purchasers accept all risks in connection with their possession or use of the variety. The variety is supplied without warranty, express or implied, of fitness for any particular purpose.

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